

WOLFEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

SOP 4.27

Date Issued: 12/27/2019

Review: 03/05/2021

[Note: This written directive is for the internal governance of the Wolfeboro Police Department and, as provided by RSA 516:36, is not intended and should not be interpreted to establish a higher standard of care in any civil or criminal action than would otherwise be applicable under existing law.]

By Order of:
Dean J. Rondeau, Chief of Police

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Policy To establish standard procedures in traffic accident investigations.

Purpose The purpose of this order is to cover:

Traffic Accidents	Investigations
Hit & Run	Reporting

Guidelines

- The department will utilize the NH Uniform Accident Report System.
- Reporting of collisions shall comply with NH RSA 264:26.
- Private property – accidents shall be investigated, but enforcement of violations may not be possible as an element of any offense is a “public way.”
- Commercial Vehicle Accidents – NH Commercial Vehicle Enforcement unit will handle or provide guidance regarding driver and vehicle regulations. (impoundment of vehicle, etc.)

Investigate This department will follow these guidelines.

Officer shall...	Accidents that...
Investigate	Involve death or injury Property damage of \$1000 or more And/or one vehicle requires towing Involving police vehicles, regardless of damage Involve the spillage of hazardous waste Involve a hit and run Involve an alcohol/ drug impairment of an operator

**SOP 4.27
Traffic Accidents**

Report not investigate	Any accident that is not covered above
------------------------	--

All reporting of collisions shall comply with the NH RSA 264:26 (Uniform Police Investigation Report of Accidents)

Response

Officers are required to respond to all accidents, except in severe weather conditions were multiple accidents have occurred. In that case the Dispatcher will assign only cases based on the following.

Mandatory response required – based on Priority

- injury or death
- Hit and run
- Impairment of driver
- Hazardous material
- Disorderly or assault at the accident
- Traffic congestion due to the accident
- Town /state vehicle or property
- Vehicle must be towed

Other cases will be requested to fill out the NH state Motor vehicle Accident report at the station.

Scene Response - First Officer investigates the accident.

Step	Action
1	Assess the situation - <i>injuries, Fire, Hazmat</i>
2	Request necessary assistance- Medical, Fire, specialist or traffic
3	Protect the area and subjects at the scene Cruiser should be parked to offer protection and Serve as a warning to oncoming traffic Warning devices or flares may be utilized if possible Additional officers for traffic control if needed
4	Identify injured subjects Provide minor medical assistance (based on officers capabilities and credentials) Assist ambulance
5	Fire, Hazmat or entrapment of victims Fire Chief or designee becomes incident commander Officer to assist
6	Personal Property – once safe to do so Ensure personal property is secured in vehicle, transported to hospital with victim or released to family member If not possible – take into custody and follow property SOP’s
7	Tow vehicle follow SOP’s guidelines
8	Dispatch notified if reportable or non-reportable under state law

CAUTION
Gas spills present an extreme danger
Make sure ignition is turned off
Non-deployed air bags – officer shall use caution & not place themselves in a position where the bag can expand and cause injury

SOP 4.27
Traffic Accidents

HAZMAT

- If Hazmat spill is known officer shall not approach until placard and spill type is known. Binoculars should be utilized from ¼ mile and Dispatch advised regarding the information.
- Dispatch will contact Chem-trac or other references to determine what the material is, and any precautions should be relayed to responders.
- Fire Chief assumes incident commander role and once finished scene command becomes police responsibility.

Chain of Command

Unless relieved by a supervisor the initial officer will investigate the accident and remain incident commander.

A specialist or reconstructionist may be assigned to assist or lead the investigation in the following cases:

Death or serious bodily injury	WPD, Sheriff's Office, NH State Police.
Commercial Vehicle or Motor Carrier	NHSP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Shall be notified and request
Police Cruiser with any injury	Sheriff Office or NH State Police
Requests by Attorney General or County Attorney	NH State Police

Data Collection

The following data should be obtained at the scene of all accidents.
(State Forms filled out in full - if required)

Basic	Time, Date and place
Operator	Name, DOB, address, phone number, license number
Owner	Name, DOB, address, phone number, insurance co
Vehicle/s	Make, model, year, VIN, license plate
Injured	Name, address, phone number, description of injury and if transported, the name of Hospital
Witnesses	Name, address, phone number
Statements	Relevant statements at the scene should be noted Witnesses should be separated during interview Written statement if needed

SOP 4.27
Traffic Accidents

Investigations A record should be made of any significant physical evidence and all the data necessary to complete the Accident form.
Key measurements – roadway, point of impact, potential evidence and other critical data should be documented.
Photos for serious cases involving property damage and injury should include at a minimum

- Interior and exterior of vehicles.
- Vehicles at final resting place.
- Debris or marks on the road.
- Roadway.
- Other documentation specific to the accident.

Hit & Run For Serious property damage or injury.

Officers shall	Take the following action...
Immediately	Broadcast information on vehicle fleeing the scene to include; Vehicle and operators Unusual Markings and damage Direction
Examine the scene	Obtain any evidence – fragments or pieces of the vehicle
Take into evidence	Paint samples Injured Victims clothing

Follow up Investigations At a minimum the following

- Medical Records.
- Physician reports.
- Blood Tests. (RSA 265:93)
- Vehicle mechanical inspections.
- Laboratory reports.
- Background investigation on operator/s including activity for 24 hour period prior to collision.

Review All investigative accidents should be reviewed by the Sergeant
Based on this, it may be assigned to an experienced investigator
The scope of the investigation may then be limited or expanded.

Notifications A supervisor shall be notified of an accident involving a serious injury
The Chief and/or Captain Executive Officer shall be notified of any fatality or critical case.

**SOP 4.27
Traffic Accidents**

Responsibilities

Position	Shall
Officer	Handle all accidents as described, unless a supervisor instructs otherwise
Dispatcher	Assist officer with data collection Make notification Coordinate multi agency response
Staff Sergeant and Sergeant(s)	Review all accident reports
Supervisor (includes Cpl & above)	Determine investigative needs Respond to scene if needed
Chief and/or Captain/Executive Officer	Reviews all major accidents Responds to fatalities if needed

Reports

NH Uniform Traffic Accident Report	Must be completed before going on days off by investigating officer Unless waiver given by supervisor
WPD Statement Form	Provide to witnesses
NH Motor Carrier Accident Report	Must be completed before going on days off by investigating officer Unless waiver given by supervisor